

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 8. (Cancelled)

9. **(Currently Amended)** A screening method for substances that have a mechanism of pharmacological action similar to that of pioglitazone, comprising the steps of:
bringing a candidate substance to be screened into contact with a protein represented by the following (a) or (b):

(a) a protein consisting of the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 2 which is capable of interacting with a thiazolidine derivative selected from the group consisting of pioglitazone, rosiglitazone, trolitazone or ciglitazone; or

(b) a protein consisting of an amino acid sequence derived from the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 2 (i) with the addition of one or plural amino acids and/or (ii) with the deletion, substitution, addition, or insertion of one to thirty amino acids, wherein said protein retains the capability to interact with a thiazolidine derivative selected from the group consisting of pioglitazone, rosiglitazone, trolitazone or ciglitazone; and

screening for the presence or absence of any interaction between the candidate substance and the protein represented by (a) or (b).

10. – 22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) A screening method for substances that have a mechanism of pharmacological action similar to that of pioglitazone, comprising the steps of:

bringing a candidate substance to be screened into contact with a protein comprising the amino acid sequence represented by SEQ ID NO: 2 which is capable of interacting with a thiazolidine derivative selected from the group consisting of pioglitazone, rosiglitazone, trolitazone or ciglitazone; and

screening for the presence or absence of any interaction between the candidate substance and the protein.

24. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said candidate substance is a low molecular weight compound.

25. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said candidate substance is a protein.

26. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 23, wherein said candidate substance is a low molecular weight compound.

27. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 23, wherein said candidate substance is a protein.

28. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said protein is immobilized on a substrate and said candidate substance is brought into contact with said immobilized protein in order to measure the capability of said candidate substance to interact with said protein.

29. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 23, wherein said protein is immobilized on a substrate and said candidate substance is brought into contact with said immobilized protein in order to measure the capability of said candidate substance to interact with said protein.

30. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 28, wherein said substrate is a chip.

31. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 29, wherein said substrate is a chip.

32. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said thiazolidine derivative is pioglitazone.

33. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 23, wherein said thiazolidine derivative is pioglitazone.

34. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 32, wherein said screening is performed by surface plasmon resonance.

35. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 33, wherein said screening is performed by surface plasmon resonance.

36. (**Currently Amended**) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said protein is protein (b) and wherein said deletion, substitution, **addition** or insertion is of one to ten amino acids.

37. (**Currently Amended**) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said protein is protein (b) and wherein said deletion, substitution, ~~addition~~ or insertion is of one to five amino acids.

38. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 9, wherein said protein is said protein (a).

39. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 32, wherein said protein is said protein (a).

40. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 32, wherein said candidate substance is a substance that has not yet been determined to be an antidiabetic.

41. (Previously Presented) A screening method according to claim 33, wherein said candidate substance is a substance that has not yet been determined to be an antidiabetic.